

## McCARTY

The pioneers of Pocahontas County represented many different races. The present family, of Irish origin, is one of the oldest families in the county. Timothy McCarty, the founder of the family was born in Ireland. He settled on Knapp's Creek, Pocahontas County, at some time before the revolution, thus being one of the earliest settlers within what is now Pocahontas County, and one of the veritable pioneers of western Virginia. In the revolution he was a soldier. He married (first) Nancy Honeyman; (second) Jane, daughter of James and Mary Waugh. Children: Daniel, married Elizabeth Moore; Preston; Justin; James; Thomas; two other sons by first marriage. All these sons by the first marriage served in the war of 1812, and only Daniel returned to Pocahontas County to live. By the second marriage: Eli, married Margaret Moore; Rueben; Samuel, married Phoebe Moore; Jacob, ~~xxxxxx~~ of whom further; Nancy, married Ezekiel Boggs; Isaac; two other sons and two other daughters.

Jacob, son of Timothy and Jane (Waugh) McCarty, died in Pocahontas County about 1890. He served in the legislature of W.Va. He married (first) Amy Boggs, (second) Hannah Brock, of Droop Mountain. Children, all except last-named two by first wife: Samuel Allen, of whom further; Elizabeth, married Henry Morrison; Mahala; Melissa, married Thomas Taylor; Julia, married Alfred Propst; Franklin, married Eliza Alderman; George W., married Rebecca Hollandsworth; Nancy, married Noah McCoy.

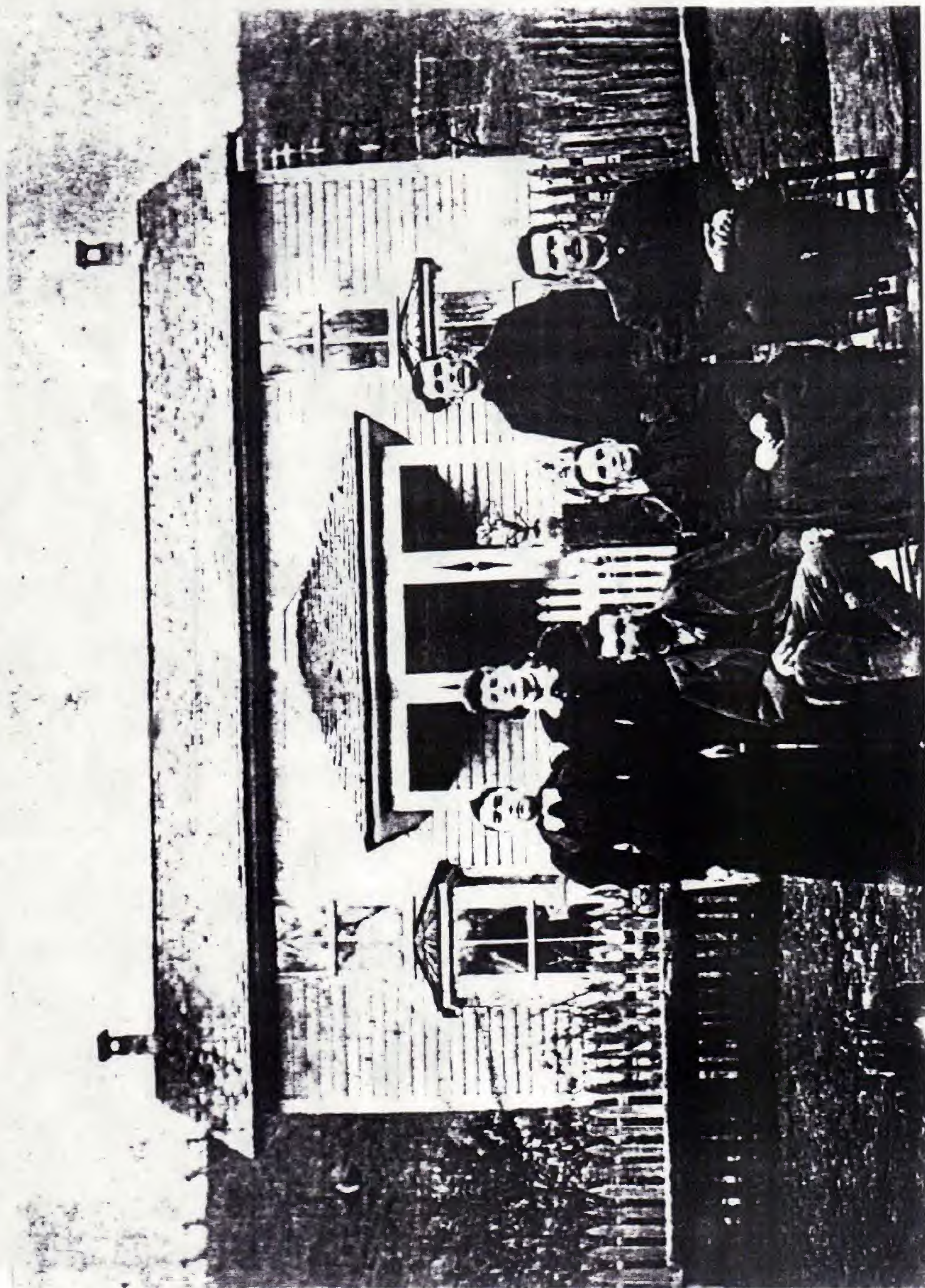
Samuel Allen, son of Jacob and Amy Boggs McCarty, was born Dec. 14, 1843. He was a stockman in Pocahontas County. He and his wife are still living on the old homestead (in 1913). In the Civil War he was a Union man, and served in the Home Guards, and also as a member of the state troops occupying the Ohio valley. He married Elizabeth, daughter of Morgan Anderson, who was born in Nicholas County, Virginia, April 29, 1845. Children: Columbus J., of whom further; Thomas M., born September 9, 1870; he was ordained in 1907 as a minister in the Methodist Episcopal church, having been a conference worker for nine or ten years prior to his ordination, and is now (in 1913) pastor at Amma, Roane County, W.Va. where he lives with his wife and nine children; Samuel E., born Sept. 19, 1872, is a minister of the Methodist Protestant Church, and is now filling (in 1913) a conference assignment at Hacker's Valley, Webster County, W.Va.; married Mabel A. Lewis, of Ohio; four children; Margaret R., born Sept. 15, 1874, married Frank Thompson, a stockman at Elkalaka, Montana; James H., born Jan. 30, 1877, a school teacher and a farmer in Pocahontas County, married Nina M. Auldridge; Amy Susan, born July 29, 1879, died Dec. 2, 1900; married Ulysses H. Nottingham, of Bear Creek, Montana; at her death she left a son, James Robert, eleven days old.

Columbus Jacob, son of Samuel Allen and Elizabeth Anderson McCarty, was born July 10, 1868. He attended the free schools. After his school days he learned the trade of machinist and carpentry. In 1908 he was elected Clerk of the County Court in Pocahontas County. He married Margaret Clementine, daughter of William S. and Julia Ann Whitman Hull, of Greenbrier County. Children: Erma Adeline, born Aug. 10, 1908, Margie Elizabeth, born June 5, 1911.

Footnote:- a son, Winters Kyle, was born Oct. 2, 1915.

This information was copied from the History of West Virginia and Its People, pages 322-323, compiled in 1913 by Thomas C. Miller and Hu Maxwell.













Wedding portrait, family  
of Samuel Allen McCarty,  
Pocahontas, West Virginia,  
1896.

*Copied Copied from out of Ireland  
my copie machine The bride.  
See next pg.*

*I bet this picture came from Pocahontas Seiner*



## INTRODUCTION *by R. Allen*

When my sister and I were young girls one of our favorite forms of entertainment was to have our mother tell us about her childhood. "Tell us about when you were a little girl," we would beg her. Then we would all pile up on my mother's bed and listen with rapt attention while my mother entertained us with stories about another little girl. She wrote the following while she was recovering from an ingrown toenail. She was searching for something to do to fill her time and my sister suggested she write about her childhood. My mother wrote the following in 1956 while living in Chicago, a long way from her beginnings in the wild and beautiful West Virginia hills. Most of what follows are the very tales she entertained us with.

*by NINNIE ELIZ. McCarty Taylor*

I am laid up with an ingrown toenail so most of my days are spent on the couch. I try to find things to fill my days. Read a spell and look about for the dictionary to check on new words. When I tire of reading I try some sewing. Pick up needle and thread and stitch a crooked row of bright yarn through blocks of wool to make a cover or two. Gives me something to do to fill the inactive days.

But most of all I travel back through other days when I was very young. A barefoot girl with light brown hair, thin and straight, touchy and shy, wandering there on father's land, a wooded place with pastures sloping from very high hills.

Today I write something of those days to fill my hours with something to do. Something to help ease my pain as I wait for doctors and medicine to heal the cursed toenail (Oh crooked toe!).

This is an "old fashioned" era - to our generation a new beginning of many things. Right after the Civil War my grandparents were young men and women. The men home from the conflict between the North and South...young men with new homes, such as they were in that time. Each one built his own house. Grandpa Eagle, who had fought with the South, built a log cabin. Grandpa McCarty, who fought with the North, built a very good house of double walls, six rooms of white shingle and double porch.

### My Father

My father was a Preacher and Circuit Rider, and a member of the Fraternal Order of Masons. Reverend Thomas Morgan McCarty was an active member of the Methodist Episcopal Church of the West Virginia Conference from 1904 to 1930 at which time ill health forced retirement. During his Ministry he served thirteen appointments which are as follows; Bomont on the Elk River (I'm five years old), Charleston Circuit near the Big Kanawha (start to school), Spencer near Sandyville (I'm nearing nine), Ripley (ten and eleven years), Osborne Mills out of Clendennin, Wallback (14 years), Ellenboro (15 and 16 years old), Pullman (17 and 18 years old), Meadowdale, Cranesville, Albright (I went away to work) and Corinth, near Tera Alta. Father was born on Bruffeys Creek in Pocahontas Co. September 9, 1870, just five years after the Civil War. We are a family of seven when father moves us to our first church appointment, Bomont Circuit. We leave our birthplace and move out of the Greenbrier Valley by way of train. Our first lap on this long journey we traveled in a carriage to meet the train. I am four years old and I remember that first parsonage sitting very close to the river, a road running



along its banks of great sand beds, a bridge and very muddy river as it flowed along, ever in sight. No doubt a threat and impending evil in our lives. We live here for a year or two. Two or three years were the most from one appointment to another, we are starting out on a life of much moving, making new friends and many adjustments. Father is blessed with divine courage.

### A Happy Beginning

Soon after our arrival into this new adventure we are setting up things in a small house and two things stand out so clear in my thoughts; a new clock is bought and a sewing machine. Father hangs the eight day clock on the wall of the living room and "tick tock, tick tock" began the days away back in those remote and unsettled hills, though we never missed what we didn't have or know about. And conditions were not questioned; so peaceful and small, simple and uncluttered. Our whole existence and times demanded respect and goodly neighborliness. The 8 day clock was very quiet with its "tick tock" let us move on on on.

At any rate, I had a happy beginning in a pleasant place. Had I been given the choice of my birth place I would have chosen exactly where I was born, set in a beautiful landscape of rich green plains and with the Allegheny Mountains as a background, fantastically beautiful, inhabited by people of zealous, enterprising and idealistic nature. The fortunate chance I have had, above all else has been the age into which I'm born. I am glad that my first years were in an ordered world, for though it passed, still the memory holds of what it means to a child to live in such a world where adults were calm and confident and where children knew the boundaries beyond which they could not go.

My early memories are not of parents so much, but of places. Thus the moving from one place to another took up a pattern of official and essential matters of church.

The eight day clock ticks on and our second move is Charleston Circuit and there I have my seventh birthday, I remember we climbed an embankment from the road (Charleston Turnpike) to the house. Homes in the early history of West Virginia were buildings of nondescript fashion. I started my first year in school here in a small one room structure and only a blurred recollection of my first day. This was not too happy an experience. We walk on muddy roads, our shoes are heavy with mud. I also remember walking on a dusty road for a mile or more to the old general store in anticipation of spending a nickel for candy, and getting the "poke" full.

### Impressions

We had a prowler one nite (a nosey neighbor), and mother was frightened and decided to borrow a gun and my brother Emerson waited up a short time to see if he came back. These are things that shock a youngster. The most pleasant and most unpleasant impressions gained in your youthful years will loom up so big. So we go from one year to the next and loose perspective.

I can remember father bringing to our first church home the 8 day clock and there was a sewing machine for mother and these two pieces of furniture you could find no more wonderful in our house. The 8 day clock ticks on the wall and ticks out our days. We also had a very fancy brass oil lamp, along with the other plain ones, which had to be cleaned and new oil added each week, the wicks trimmed and



chimneys polished. We used this kind of lighting until I was fifteen and then came the enchanting gas jets running out of the walls with there bright even glow.

### Magic Things

The crank telephone hung upon the parlor wall but rarely did we use it, for our lives were complete within our immediate environment. But it was a wonder to us.

### The Unmentionable

The nearest I ever came to any knowledge of drunks was a neighbor who would pass our home late in the nite, yelling as down the road he came, driving his horses like he was insane. My mind reflects on muffled words and things that were not meant for my ears but drinking men and saloons were placed and conduct to be regarded with complete indifference, even to speak of such a person would show bad taste. So if I were sent to bring a gift of milk or butter from our neighbors house I stood outside in dreadful fear that the father might show himself while drunk (intoxicated). While those journeys I took alone were always more or less frightening for if it were not a stranger upon the highway then thoughts would crowd my head with fear of the mad dog which had been reported, and I spent my seventh summer learning that my life would be a little different than most kids and obeyed all of fathers peculiar notions and strict control.

The third move took us two days by road wagons into Spencer Circuit. Here was the typical hill country village composed of a clan of "ne'er do wells" (and nearly no sense). How well I remember this house and where it sat upon a very narrow rocky road with the six houses all strung out along this strip of road and we are in the center of this unfriendly civilization. I had my first awakening here of the two faced conduct of people and behavior which threw my mother into a fighting controversy over one petticoat which our neighbor had stolen from the wash she did for us. Father took up the battle with a hammer in hand to fight any of the clan who offered to attack us. I'll say now it was not a fitting thing to do. Dad could say words that would frighten you right out of your skin and no one dared to cross him when he was angry.

My mother had a sneaky way of correcting us for our bad behavior, and one I had very little respect for. I recall one time in particular when father had been away on one of his travels and returned in the nite and nothing was said until we were all washed and dressed for the early morning meal (breakfast), and low, father stands before us with a handful of hickory or some long willow switches... one for each of us and we were ordered to walk to the back of the house and out to the barn and here we stand in turn for what father deemed a good switching. No doubt about it, he firmly believed in the old bible verse (spare the rod and spoil the child). Secretly I thought my mother very "namby pamby" for submitting to such tactics. That too is passed and I remember it now as to be very humorous as six children, with the exception of the baby, march to the horse shed to be punished for quarreling over our places around the table. I see that table yet, a crude affair standing in the kitchen with oil cloth for cover and tin cups for us to drink from, father would buy these tin cups because they could not break and they were cheap. There against the wall sat a long bench which could be found in anyones home at that day sitting behind the table.

The older brothers are getting big enough now to work at something. Father and mother worked hard and expected us to do the same, which caught dad buying a grist



mill with soul purpose of keeping the boys busy at something. Well that project (my fathers first) proved to be my mothers fly in the ointment. There were just too many irons in the fire as the proverb goes. This work kept the boys out of school which caused great discussion among ourselves. Opportunity showed only once as far as schooling was concerned in my childhood and if you did not take it you surely did not have it.

The 8 day clock ticks on. As I have said each house was adequate, so Spencer house was not too different except for a very good fenced in yard and small barn leading to the rear. Perhaps five or six rooms built like a square all squatting on ground floors. It is not what I remember about the houses that go to make up the greater part of my childhood, but each house meant a new and different phase in my development. I am eight years old now, soon to be nine before we move from this "dog town"...but I can see old Johnny Klinger here, almost like a magic trick (a wondering man), he would be there from nowhere, setting at the table eating like a tramp and acting the part, called himself the coal digger, though we had no way to prove that, for he would surely go as misteriously as he came. And we children would wonder about old Johnny and ask between ourselves, who is he and why does he come and go like a ghost? But we got no answers.

#### Vanity oh Vanity

I see myself taking a dare from my bosom friend. She is full of teasing and I'm disgusted with the hair line on my forehead. A nine year old girl wished for bangs so madly that she took the hair clipper from the hand that was holding them out to her. And the friend said, "I dare you to cut out the front part of your hair." I, stupid enough to think that maybe by cutting my "widows peak" off, I'd have it no more and thus grows the lovely bangs I thought were beauty divine. Oh dreadful hour when I thought of my father and what he would say to me for being so bold as to defy everyone in the household and cut out my god given gift (the widows peak). But surprisingly, my debauchery was not mentioned, but I looked pretty ridiculous with a clump of combed down hair doing a poor job of covering the almost bare spot on my forehead.

#### The Hired Girl

Well we are a growing household and Justin was born here, which added the eighth baby to our family. By this time there had to be a permanent housemaid and there were many young woman to be had for a small fee. Though to hold one in satisfaction was the problem and so they came and went; and every week or so father would inform us that another hired girl would be along soon and for us to present ourselves neat and tidy.

Our first housemaid, Dilly, was a very high strung girl and could do housework like a human speed demon. Next there was Ona, who was kind hearted but sloppy with everything she did. So sloppy that I'll never forget the rice she cooked for my mother after the baby was born and mother craved a light dish. My mother could not eat this preparation and for years afterwards she would tell us kids about that dish of rice that Ona had brought to her bedside half cooked.

#### A Lesson Learned The Hard Way

I recall inviting myself next door to spend a nite; somehow I had this one fault of pushing myself into places with the honest to goodness idea that if one soul



offered me one glance or word of interest I was in. So here I am going to bed in our next door neighbors house, no doubt showing too much interest in the older folks conversation. So I'm highly insulted to catch the words spoken by a family member implying that I'm the "News Paper". I could not stand to be named tale carrier so I slipped out of bed, dressed myself in the dark room, and slid out into a very dark nite, climbed the tangled fence to make a quiet exit across a bramble of berry bushes, suffered scratched legs, scratched arms, and scared numb before I found our front door...promising myself to let that be a lesson and wait to be invited.

Invitations were not a formal practice in the hill country. There was an established custom to visit your neighbor which fixed a tradition among the hill folks, a truly democratic and relaxed relationship which was a very essential practice to keep alive these pioneers. And an old saying goes, "on rainy days in the mountains all you could see out in the midst of a wet down pour were black crows and the Methodist Preacher". (Never shirking from difficulties, but ever remembering with gratitude our position in society.)

#### On to Better Things

It's time to move again and we leave Spencer Circuit and go to Ripley. Here we have much more of everything to our advantage. Our first small town and quite an improvement in this parsonage over the one we lived in before. I'm overflowing with pride as we survey the seven room bungalow and clean sidewalks (that meant no more muddy shoes) and a large grade school to get some honest to goodness learning. Life had a new meaning, also a new maid. Mother managed her household without even seeming to bestir herself and with Maude's help she kept her children clean and comfortable.

Dad sells the grist mill so the boys can now attend school. By this time we have outgrown our grades, but that never bothered dad. Just had to gulp down our feelings about it and adjust ourselves to another humiliation and off to school we were sent to sit in classes with children younger than us.

#### "April Beauty" A Special Day in My Life Age 9

Snow is falling on an early spring day and the journey is very clear to me as we ride double upon the white horse. We take a short cut over the hill and ride for or five miles to Aunt Pinah house where she and Uncle Lewis had lived all their lives. Never having any children made the big farm a lonely place and when she came to see us one of us would always be asked to take a visit with them. I loved this old place as soon as we rode up to the big white front gate. Never a spring without remembering this place so remote but very lovely with apple orchards, big green meadows, a small brook flowing near by and the old blacksmith shop under the hill where the blacksmith worked part time. How real that old place looms up in my mind and the spring I spent with those two very special people on that lovely spot. The pink apple blossoms I can smell yet and hear the little brook gurgling a happy symphony over the crooked creek bed.

#### The Witch Next Door

If there ever were one, it was She! In an eleven year old girls mind many things seem strange and imagination is truly fantastic. So this old lady lived next door



to us for two years. She lived alone except for the times her only son gets a furlough from the Army, maybe to stay a few days. And one day he came home with a beautiful wife. We got to know her real well, but her mother-in-law was truly jealous of her. The mother-in-law would throw a tantrum and go to bed and stay two or three weeks with shock from one of these angry fits. Then is when I would look upon her at my distance as one of the devils angels. Then she would recover as suddenly as the rising of the morning sun, and perhaps just as cheerful, and come by our way and maybe invite me to come and have a bite with her. I could not resist these invitations because I knew she could make the best cup of coffee in all the world and fry plates of sweet brown mush, the like I'd never eaten and I knew she liked me. On many occasions I was a short substitute for company for her. Though she could never accept her one and only daughter-in-law and finally got so treacherous and full of hysteria the girl left her and went back to her people. The husband followed his wife and the last fit I can remember was early one morning and someone had conveyed the word that Old Lady King was sitting over on the hillside by the railroad track begging the Engineer to run over her.

#### "On to the Fifth Move and Osborne Mills Circuit"

Roane County, West Virginia. We have moved from the sublime to the ridiculous. My next three years are lived on land and house that we owned. We were in the deep hills again and few people to be seen and when we arrived at this very remote region I disliked the change very much. It's getting near my twelfth birthday and we are faced with many problems but indeed the region was full of beauty and there is much to remember and too much to tell and I look back now at three years of my life lived on this very rugged and remote place I was unaware of a very sacred interlude in my years. The farm taught all of us a lesson. Two attempts to be farmers (would be farmers) just could not fit into fathers profession. The farm proved unworthy of our labor.

#### The 8 Day Clock Ticks On

The church sends us on our sixth move into Wallback, Clay County, West Virginia, 1914. This has all the classifications of the typical rural vicinity. One store and post office combined, grist mill, church, and school house; a one room building as is the rule all during my childhood and I remember this one especially for I'm fourteen now and know we have a teacher who is wasting our precious time. Father was not happy with this appointment and hoped the church would move him next year, but we stayed on here for two years.

It was here I saw for the first time in my life the automobile, one owned by the doctor. New things were beginning to take the place of the old and the horse and buggy, so familiar to me, would soon have no place on the highways. Even before any roads were paved the automobile stirred up a lot of dust or plowed through rough and wet roads and people all over the country began to have gas lit homes or electricity.

This place is the last of our remote habitations; we leave Wallback in the second autumn. It's a big move for us. Everything, all household goods and much preserved food and seven not too well dressed children go by freight and train to our next parsonage. We have now moved to Ellenboro. Upon arrival late in the evening at suppertime it was a wonderful thing for a hungry tired family to see our new home with bright lites shining all over the house, little gas jets glowing upright on the walls in each room. How wonderful the long table in the dining



room looked loaded down with good things cooked and prepared by the ladies aid of the church, a reception supper for the new preacher and his family. I remember how embarrassed my mother was as we presented the younger of the family with their cheap attire falling apart on them after a long day and night of hard wear and train ride.

We have arrived after fifteen years of living in the back country, away from the railroad, into a town with every sign of the new world, railroad stop, a fine big school so near that you could throw a stone at it, two fine churches, lots of clean sidewalks, many beautiful homes and good people. The parsonage is a large house, two story frame building (still stands) in Ellenboro. I remember my father's garden here and the most beautiful flowers that he planted and grew in the yard.

I saw my second automobile here. Our neighbor bought one. I also got my first automobile ride. One Sunday I'm invited to accompany them out into the country. This was 1917 and I am seventeen (17) years old.

#### Changes

I'll never forget how my father nursed us through the big measles (mother too). I caught them in school and one by one until there were seven of us in bed with them and I missed a very good Easter program at the church. I recall how hard I had worked on my part in the program and which I couldn't perform - due to the measles.

I studied piano again, but the term was short, for mother went to bed rather suddenly with typhoid fever and everything stopped so mother could have every minute of our attention. These are sad days as my brothers go away to work and one joins the Marines and he never came back. He lived the rest of his life, into his 80's, in a V.A. hospital. At last I don't like what I feel, the little girl in me has also gone away and I'm acting more like a woman, filling my life with adult chores and thinking about boys with a removed interest but no outward display except to gather in parties which is a phase all adolescents meet upon.

We moved from Ellenboro to Pullman and my life as a preacher's daughter ends here. but not in reality, not until I go to Akron to find work and get married there.

#### Frock Tail Coat and Collar Button

In my fathers early ministry he wore white pleated shirt fronts, high stiff collars, black string ties, and the frock tail coat and grey trousers. This was the proper attire for a young ordained minister to wear in the pulpit and father could wear them with great superiority on special occasions, like the meeting of a church wedding or perhaps on invitation to some lodge dinner, such as the Masons, of which he was a member as far back as I can remember. Those preparations leave a nostalgia in my mind. I can see father standing before a wall mirror shaving with his pearl handled razor and always the big old china shave mug with the round pat of soap and shaving brush to spread lather from the soap that nestled always there in the china mug. Well that was always a difficult task for my father. I look back and recall how he would sharpen that old razor by whipping it across a big wide strap of smooth leather. Then fill the little wash basin with a dib of warm water poured from the one and only tea kettle in our house. In my earliest memory there was a kettle of cast iron, all black and very heavy, sitting



on the back of our wood stove. Now the shave is finished and the beautiful white shirt and stiff collar is another task which my father really dreaded because this picture of him leaves one in my mind most clear. "just can't find my collar buttons" he would say; well everyone in the household would have to look for dad's collar buttons and while mother and the rest are looking, father no doubt accidentally found them, but not without plenty of verbal display on the whole household for being so careless. On with the task of putting a collar button in a button hole around a 17 neck. If it were a very hot day I would truly be sorry for my father to have to struggle through one of these toiletries and to go into a strangers home or any home for that matter to dine. Father would never be without his coat.

I see him very clearly on many occasions that I have been privileged to travel with him to do some social church work, and this demanded a certain pattern and so it was that we went to many homes to visit and dine with some church members. At the time I'm taking all this in my stride, never thinking that someday I would look back upon my life and realize that I was special and saw and heard special things. I was very special to father and mother. I traveled many miles with my dad on horse back. Sometimes to a village church or a very remote one. Perhaps we'd have to leave the horse hitched and walk a path up a rugged hillside or travel a very dark road in the nite. Fathers work was never done. Nite and day he was always at it and bore up with great fortitude under the pain from a very long injury on the ankle bone, one which never healed. Oh if he could have had this modern day medicine there would not have been a life time of pain.

#### Getting to Know My Father

Charleston, West Virginia is one of the oldest cities in the United States. Also the first brick roads or streets are laid here. My first visit to this city was in nineteen twelve (1912). I was with my father and we were stopping here all nite on our way to Osborne Mills Circuit. I was to spend a summer here, or at least part of it, for company with my dad while he is preaching and making plans to buy Big Sandy Farm. We were invited to live in one of the fine big homes in Anna Village, a family by the name of Gary. There were several boys and one daughter about my age, which meant a lot to me. We rented a hotel room in Charleston for that nite. A large room with massive furniture and two big overdone and oversize beds. Tis summer and very hot and I'll never forget it; for father slept on the floor by the open window. We spent the evening in a cheap theater. The first and last time I knew of my dad to do that sort of thing and no doubt it was all for my benefit. But I remember him asking me if I liked the show. To me it was nothing more than a bunch of undressed women kicking and talking loud, so I'm sure my twelve year old mind had no reception for this sort of thing. We did not stay to see it all.

Our trip into Osborne Mills continued the next day. Out to Clendennin by train and from there by way of road hack or the mail carriage. Dad soon had the gift of an old white horse to ride over those dusty roads and hillsides and we're soon settled for a few weeks of trials.

Dad buys the farm and we go back to Jackson County to wait for our house to be finished. My father did most of this and we moved into it in the late fall of 1912.

We had moved four times since we left Spencer Circuit, lived in the Ripley Parsonage, then moved from there to a piece of land in Jackson County, stayed



there until the spring of nineteen twelve (1912). Then the place was sold out from under us and the family moved down into a little house in Cottageville, about five or six miles from the Ohio River. Here we stayed, or at least here is where my mother waited for the new house. This was the end of the awful dry summer and the beginning of a very lean winter.

### In My Father's House

To go back in time I'd choose the year in my life when I was eleven and the time sister and I were baptised. The place, in father's church at Ripley. It's the Easter season and mother sewed white embroidery dresses for the occasion. The church looks most beautiful in the simple lines of an old New England design and the bell in the steeple was ringing out its beautiful Crescendo on a very mild spring morning. We are blessed with water as we kneel at the little altar and father performs this ritual, as he has many before, but today is our turn. Even though I'm not capable of grasping this event in my life as it's taking place, I look back now and remember and am grateful a thousand times over for that reverent day.

We live at this appointment a very short year for dad decides to buy a home and property consisting of a six room bungalow and 85 acres of a very beautiful location in Jackson County. We move out of the parsonage at Ripley and move into the new property the following fall. We like the lovely house and gardens and pretty view of the valley and make new friends. But all this ended as abruptly as it began. By now father has some new and more illogical arrangement to sell and buy a more remote location and that is an old run down land in Roane County. We have to have a new house before the family can move again and while that is being done we take the house in town (Cottageville), for by now the little farm is sold. Father could not quite shake the hay off his shoulders. Once born a country boy, always a bit shows.

### Pleasant and Unpleasant

It's late summer and rain has come after many months of dry parching weather. Parts of the family are with mother in the village while, father and the older boys are away.

Cottageville is a small place near the Ohio River, and here we're living for a waiting period until our new home is built on the farm. Dad must be gone from home most of the time now and I find myself concerned over mother. She was a timid soul and disliked being alone, perhaps I sensed this to be a bit of imagination, but I remember I spent much more time in the kitchen with mother than anywhere else about the house. Oh those lemon cookies she baked were so good!

It's a Sunday and raining all day and we know the water is filling all the countryside. I'm curious to see the Ohio River over its banks. This meant we must walk the railroad tracks for a distance of four or five miles. Well, I finally persuaded mother. So we struck out on our long walk in some drizzle and kept our ears open for an oncoming train; which gave us a little concern when we had to pass over one of the railroad trestles. Well mother and I took this walk alone which took all of the afternoon and we saw the Ohio River washing out much property and crops. As we stood by, afar off we could hear voices crying out with grief and anger. Now I was not so much intrigued with my walk to see an angry



river, but felt a great injustice had been done to the farmers who saw corn growing tall and green, washed out of the ground right in front of their eyes and no one could do anything about it.

#### A Dot on the Map

Amma was one of our Post Offices which occupied a corner of the general store during our three years on Big Sandy. 'Tis the head waters of a long muddy river which flowed almost through our front door and under the barn. One could never be sure how safe you were in this dark restless stream, impossible to bathe or swim in, though many days we spent in the shallow water exploring for pink and blue muscle shells. These mollusks remind one of the oyster shell, but definitively unfit to eat and a very unpleasant odor if found dead. We caught many kinds of fish and soft shell turtles. Only the very large turtles are to be desired and make a most delectable dish if one knows how to prepare them.

Well a trip to the Post Office was made once or twice a week and this was always a chore for one or two of us children. As I remember now this was one of the lonesome wagon roads ever traveled, nothing but two legs or horse and carriage could attempt it. One day is especially clear. I wanted to sell my summer hatch, mother had chickens and I was awarded two for the market. Well at a country store in that day and time the farmer traded eggs, butter, and chickens for merchandise. Sis and I take a basket full of eggs and two chickens and we start out on our journey over the swinging bridge down below our house and up a very narrow and shallow road and through the woods for a short cut. As we start to climb up the hill we hear something making a distressful mournful cry. I'll never forget how badly we were frightened as we looked across to a very dingy home where they kept a crazy woman. This was our last trip to the general store. We were sure something dreadful could happen to us if we came this way again.

#### A Strange Custom

I'm going with an older friend of mine to sit all nite with her and members of her family to wait for the dead. A corpse is being shipped home. To arrive at her house seems like we walk from our house to the wake more than a mile or so through the black nite. I had never been on one of these sitting up all nite respective customs before, but I'm glad I spent this nite. It's one of the vigils and customs of the mountain folk. We have arrived after dark, traveling by foot over a deserted road, used more for a private cow path, but never the less the body is being brought home. Lamps are lit, adding to an already dismal atmosphere. Much food has been prepared and the woman folk walk around all nite, in and out, creeping about, some are talking and some are eating. But me, I'm just an onlooker and I get very very sleepy, so sleepy I can't stay awake. The chairs are few and since I'm supposed to be sitting up with this party I wonder how I'm going to last till morning. There I was perched up on the old family trunk, wishing I had never come. The dead finally arrived by wagon in the wee hours of the morning and by now I am too sleepy to move from my perch and really know by now this was no place for me. Oh blessed day! To see the sun rise and walk back to my home with go great faith in this kind of custom. Rather ludicrous habit, very impressive and leaves you with an unwholesome feeling. But with no morturaries, funerals were held in the home, and out of respect for the dead someone had to be awake to meet them.



### Too Much Work

Sugar cane is grown all over the Southern parts of the country. Little patches, big patches, one acre, maybe ten acres. Just out of curiosity perhaps, my dad planted some one summer in the small strip of bottom land lying close to the creek bed. All rather shallow waters and the main road crossed over there at one place near the cane patch. We worked very hard for two days boiling sugar cane juice, keeping fires burning low under a big vat, skimming it to be sure of a clean clear syrup (black strap molasses). Some of it was poured in gallon jugs for winter storage, but most of our hard work was for nothing. Father was in a hurry to be done so he poured the syrup into a ten gallon stone crock and sits it on an old sled, hitches up our horse Bessie and she and dad strike out for the house down across this road with shallow waters. The sled hit some rocks and tossed the jug into the creek bed. I'll never forget the fury of my father that day. I can see him yet coming down that little crooked path out past the corn crib, past "his" and "hers", over and through the gate, past the barn, looking blue in the face and walking like some one had shot him in the back. Well by the time he came into the yard the whole house knew father was having one of his tantrums and mother crept back in the house and let him blow, rant, rave and blame everyone of us for his clumsiness. Dad owed on this place, so no doubt he figured black strap molasses would be another item he would not have to buy. So this was a financial loss to him also.

### Real and Unreal

Railroad trestles covered bridges, empty old houses, railroad tunnels and high swinging bridges were my fear and dread during my childhood. There was always one or two or these things that I had to encounter, maybe one our way to church or school or over the hill to the general store. Well take a covered bridge, a wooden structure over a small creek on a quiet moonlit nite in a very remote part of some valley and you have previously been told that all covered bridges are haunted. So when you come to one of these structures, perhaps walking with friends, as I was always with friends, your eyes look for a ghost and what you expect to see could be most any shape, for by now your mind has fixed itself in gloomy fantasy and you might as well have seen the ghost. Because you are so terrified and your legs are so stiff you wonder if you'll ever be the same.

Railroads though are fun to walk. To walk the tracks by taking three or four ties in your stride is a challenge. We kids would always make a game of this; to see how far we could reach or how many ties we could cover with one long step. It's funny what kids will find to make a game of. Ours were strange, but not strange or odd to us. I have rolled many a barrel loop and it's quite a trick to keep it up and rolling before it gets away from you.

But I never quite recovered from ghost stories. Because even now if I go back to the hills I remember all those loquacious rumors. Perhaps there will always be stories, strange and doubtful. But I never walk on a quiet deserted road at nite with the moon hanging high and shadows from tall trees and bramble bush fall in front of me without the old fear returning. The goblins'll get you.

### Memories of My Mother

Never in all my life as a child did I ever see my mother spend any money. Not even as much as a quarter, father would leave a small sum in the house when going



away for a few days and if there were any articles to be had from the corner store one of the children was sent.

Mother had very little interest in things for herself. If she ever did, the desires were wiped out by the time father had moved us from here and there. Anyhow your Sunday dress hung in the closet from Sunday to Sunday and you never dared take it down and slip it on for anything else. So when mother got dressed up I can't remember any of those Sunday dresses. Usually they were dark and very plain (that much I know). She was very particular about her hair and would stand before the mirror and primp for hours.

She sewed lovely things for sis and I and I remember white embroidered dresses and dark red wool ones trimmed in white lace and satin striped silk. I remember lovely sailor collars on middy blouses and self covered button trimmed skirts the buttons running up and down on slit hems. Father would always consult my mother if we liked a bolt of cloth we might see in the general store. I remember calicos, beautiful red and blue, yellows and greens, the likes I'll never see again... and pure silk that when you walked the skirts rattled until you could hear them all over the church. How often when I was a small girl did I wish to be tall enough to wear such a skirt. There were the hats with long black ostrich feathers, all elegance to a girl of seven or eight.

Mother had great pride in her sewing and cooking and seemed always to be able to find something to cook, even when our pantry was pretty bare. She rattled the dishes. She grew house plants with loving care and no matter where we moved or how far, some of those plants went along and each bare house soon became alive as we unpacked boxes, barrels, furniture, and so it was to me an exciting time of year, even for father, but mother contained herself under all conditions. I have lived in two worlds. But my mother lived in one. Without a trace of bitter disillusion on the path she had chosen. There was only one desire for young women in her day. That was to plan for marriage. How different things are now. Nothing ever stays the same, but those days I lived are fresh in my memory and memories are necessary. The past and now and the future are all related. So I think often of my mother and see her in a role which few women have lived. Keeping the home fires burning, no matter how far or how long my father's work kept him away.

#### Father's Family

My grandfather Samuel A. McCarty and grandmother Elizabeth Anderson McCarty lived on Bruffeys Creek in Pocahontas County and to this union were four sons; Columbus, Samuel, James, and Thomas, and two daughters; Margaret and Susan. Columbus, nick named Lum McCarty, the oldest, had studied law and taught school all his life. Uncle Sam never joined any United Church or Conference, but did church work all of his life. Uncle Jim taught school most of his life and finally retired to a farm in Vermont, where most of the clan migrated leaving the old homestead in southern West Virginia. Susan and Aunt Margaret married sheep ranchers and moved to Montana soon after their marriages. Aunt Susan died in 1906 in childbirth. (I don't believe my father was ever reconciled to her death.) It was a double wedding. I can remember so well the photographs of there wedding in mother's album. Aunt Margaret and Aunt Susan dressed in full length white gowns and their dark hair piled high on lovely head and shoulders. Grandma Anderson had a pure Danish personality. She and Grandpa visited us when I was about sixteen and we lived in the parsonage at Ellenboro, West Virginia. I can still see how they looked. Both very serious people. Grandpa like a tall straight tree with an



imperial mustache, deep blue eyes that could pierce you through and through. And dried tobacco juice ever present on the white bosom. This was a man of very few words, but if he spoke, you heard him. Dear grandmother was love and joy. Stern but full of compassion. She sometimes wore cloth of her own weaving, underwear and topskirts. I was surely intrigued with my grandmother's secret pockets in those full long drab skirts she wore. I can't say that she was untidy, far from being that way. But in those days color had not arrived in our clothing. (I even wore black stockings all through my school days.) The secret pocket was where she carried all their money. The cloth and styles were quality you won't find anymore and some of the styles were simply a thing of loveliness and grandmother had beauty and exquisite breeding.

They built the home they lived in and reared their family in. A sturdy, white, two story house. Though I only remember a fleeting look as we are moving away from the valley. The house is still a very solid picture in my mind as we left my birthplace (Taggart Valley, Pocahontas County, West Virginia).

### Breakfasts

We rose early because my father and mother were trained to do so in their childhood. The day was for getting things done and no member of the family would sit until all were up and had bathed their faces in a cool basin of water. The food was always simple, but good. We seldom ate our bread cold, hot biscuits were the first thing on our early days menu. That meant one must build a very hot fire in the old iron and wood stove and the little square wooden coffee mill with iron handle ground out our coffee. Coffee was bought by the bean in little brown paper bags. I remember the first highway advertisement, a public notice in print, "Arbuckle Coffee and Mail Pouch Tobacco".

I was past thirteen before any community had seen the wonder of wonders; a gas range for the home. I walked from our home over the hills for several miles with Vincent, my third brother, to see this gas stove installed in the kitchen of a dear friend's home, who was especially kind to my brother, for he had been much help to them as an errand boy and lived with them for many months, earning a small fee. In my girlhood my older brothers were away on some important farmers land earning their keep as soon as they were big enough to hoe corn or milk cows.

### The Canoe Ride On The Elk River

I can remember being in a canoe just once. This was on the very deep and muddy waters of the Elk River. That day in my life stands out as though it happened yesterday. I was with my father in the buggy going along a very narrow road under a very high mountain on one side and the muddy waters below us on the other side. The buggy wheels were getting hard to pull, for this road is red clay mud and very difficult in wet weather. The horse can't pull out of this hole that we were stuck in in the middle of this murky, steep, narrow road and you could not turn sideways for the river would surely catch you if the buggy tilted. The mountain hanging over us decided our next move, to unhitch the horse, lead her out and go find a friend. The Good Samaritan. We walked a few yards and discovered a kind family living nearby. My dad identified himself and explained our predicament and quite naturally, like all good hill folks, we were taken in like one of the relatives. Soon we were fed and the man's team of horses were on their way to pull my dad's buggy out of that clay mud, which seemed to be a powerful glue. In the meantime the pretty young daughter of this abode was entertaining me with a



canoe ride on this dreadful river. I hope I did not show how frightened I was of that experience.

Father traveled constantly but my mother cared very little about leaving her children and if she went it must be arranged. So more and more Dad and I were together on these missions of several natures which are required of a circuit rider.

I would dearly love to go back to Queen Shoals just to see that red clay once again and look over and down into that river.

### Parlors

The parlor room I remember so well. For there was always a parlor room in our home. In fact any "ne'er do well" furnished one room in the home which was never used except for special company, such as the preacher's visit, a wedding, or a funeral. These darling rooms I adored with their red carpet or a new homemade woven rug with bright mingled colors lying upon the wide boards. Stiff, straight back chairs, the little love seats, lace curtains, and family pictures fill this special room. I can remember the red plush cushions and smell the musty odor as I prowled through a collection of the long forgotten stiff cards with a double picture of some sort on each card, put there along side the parlor stereoscope to amuse yourself. Looking through it at those double pictures which would seem to come to life as you looked through this phenomenal instrument of which two pictures appear as one and stand out in relief.

I recall the little brown coffee mill, which no doubt my mother received as a wedding gift (because I can't remember being without it), never taken down except to grind our coffee beans for early breakfast. My dad and mother arose early and we children were demanded to do likewise. After all were gathered around the table, father would say his table grace and serve and each plate went to its proper place as we waited for father to finish this very ordered task.

I recall so well now the darling little house and land which was my father's first real estate adventure. And how mother had hoped she could stay on in it. This was another interlude which led us into a stray experience before our next church move.

### A Jewel in The Rough

It was an early fall day, we were hot and tired from picking corn and beans out of a large corn field my father had planted on a hillside above the creek. On the other side stood a little one room shack called "a house" by the hill folks. For a long time it had stood empty and to anyone passing by, they would give it little thought. But this fall a new bride and her husband moved into this obscure little one-room shack and I remember my mother took an interest in our new neighbor. We stopped in to chat with her on our way from the bean and corn patch and I learned on my thirteenth summer I had found a rare woman, giving sunshine and warmth to which had been a most obscure and neglected byway on Big Sandy. She and mother sat and chatted and I looked on an inspiring revelation of true devotion and charity. While they talked she prepared a simple meal of potatoes and fresh vegetables and a pan of corn bread and we ate and enjoyed this hour to which has always lived in my mind as something very great to me. "A jewel in the rough."



### I Go To A Wedding

It was the middle of summer on a very hot Sunday afternoon. Father and I climbed on our horse, he in the saddle and I riding double. Thus we traveled a long dusty road ten miles to marry someone I had never seen before or since. Children were not allowed so I did not actually see the ceremony. And perhaps it would have been an unimportant event if father had collected a deserving fee for his services. We left soon after the ceremony without eating or much rest from our hot journey. Father turned to me and looked very disgusted as we rode back to his church appointment in Amma. No one was the better off for this service except I had a new hair ribbon the next day. A beautiful plaid ribbon which I had longed for. But what kind of man was it who could ask anyone to ride ten miles in torrid heat for two dollars? Did they stay married with that lacking of appreciation of a good man's true devotion to his cause? I doubt if they did. I remember father very well on this day as he gave me the two dollars and said, "Maybe you will enjoy it!"

### Digging In

At the age of seven I was helping my mother in the kitchen and from then on I could be found there with her at meal time preparation. Either setting the table or picking up little trips from the store house to stove.

I have carried in wood cut for cook stoves. I have carried in water in buckets from the outside pump or spring. One summer about 1912 it was hot and dry in June and we had no rain until late August. Our cisterns and well went completely dry and we could not do wash. How we kept clean I cannot say. Maybe we didn't. Anyhow, we carried water from a spring across a railroad track over in a meadow, under a hill. That was our drinking water and we were allowed to wash our face and hands. I still have a scar on my knee from a sore that came there during the dry spell. It took a long time healing.

I have helped my brother saw and cut wood to heat our home with. I've rode horse back without saddle into the bramble bush to pick berries. Also doubled up with my father on many a trip in the hot summer and be wet with horse sweat and smell like one. Took many a two and three mile walk to buy coal oil and coffee and sugar and such things from the old general store where you would find the Post Office and store combined. It would be our delight to go in one of these stores and spend a nickel for stick candy or Long Tom gum wrapped in fancy tissue paper (a waxy substance after the sweet was chewed out). That's the only kind of gum we could get. They did not make any other.

I went barefoot every summer until after I was thirteen. I remember the nite I went to a little party with our maid and I sat on a chair with my feet under my dress. That was the last time I went anywhere without my shoes...such as they were!!!!!!

### A Bountiful Summer

The planting. I remember things my father grew as he outdid himself. He would grow many things that had never before been grown on such an impossible location. But my father could not be stumped. There were new berries grown in the corner of the garden plot and strawberries cultivated and the most generous supply of any



vegetable you could name. The melon patch was a new delicacy for us and a rare article to be found growing in that location.

I never heard of sugar cane, but my dad grew a patch along the bottom land and we learned from him how to make molasses syrup. The cane is crushed and the juice obtained by a crude, makeshift press my father invented. The family horse pulls the press in a circular motion and sweet, white greenish water pours from a spout into buckets. This juice is then boiled in open vats out of doors. All of the process goes on out of doors and the day must be calm and cool. Fires must be kept at medium heat and careful skimming off as the foam collects on top of the boiling syrup. This was our joy and delight, to stand over the sweet syrup, hot and delicious, boiling away in the evening glow and everyone waiting for the pour off into the large brown earthen jugs. We kids made many batches of taffy from his kind of molasses, pulled into creamy sticks and cut into little pieces for storage.

We never grew wheat; mostly corn and cut many stacks of hay. This was work for the grown ups. Three brothers older than I, with dad's supervision, a job to be done was always in sight. But the boys hearts were not in it. The condition of the land and its location would always be rough and still is. For many rural districts have been lost since the little red school house has faded from the country back roads.

Ah, those little school houses; one room, crude affairs and the pot bellied stove, center wise, where during most of the dreadful cold winter were fired by the school teacher. A desk for the teacher was always placed so she or he could face the children. All sizes and ages grouped together in this one room building. A long, narrow path lead you away out back to the "his" and "hers". A bucket was kept full of water from a spring with a long handled dipper sitting where any of us, if we cared to, could drink from this unsanitary measure.

#### Bringing in the Sheaves

I have been taken along when my father would be invited to some thrashers day. That was the day when all the farm wives would cook until they outdid themselves to feed the men. Children stood back to wait for second table. I can remember how impatient and hungry I would get waiting for my turn at the dinner table. Each harvest of wheat or oats required a thrashing machine and this was shared by one and all who had a wheat crop. So the season wound up quickly by the neighborly policy of grouping the men for the day of harvest. So the farm wives would plan ahead for the day the thrashers would come. From one farm to another this would go on until each farmer had his wheat thrashed. Farm wives would get together and all bake pies and cakes and big loaves of bread and fill a table with so much good food that the likes were not to be compared with any other feast. And many pleasant and happy days were spent this way in summer as the old time farmer labored very long and hard to save his crops. Though as I look back and compare the modern day farmer to the ones which I knew then I can hardly understand how they did as well as they did with no machinery to speak of. And the hillside land, most of it was difficult for one man to stand on the slopes and follow a hand plow drawn by a not too well fed horse or mule through fresh cleared timberland full of rocks and stumps.



## Tragedy

The news of the sinking of the Titanic, the British ocean liner, came to us on an April day, the 15th, in the year I was twelve. I remember all the family was at home at the Big Sandy Farm. How the news was carried to us I can't remember. But I still feel that chill I got as I listened to the adults remarks about how so many women, men and children were lost at sea on a dark nite. A pleasure ship had hit a mountainous iceberg and suddenly people were dying in far off cold waters and my childhood had its first shock of a great tragedy. Some of the shocking news that has gone into my past has blurred. Though it has been many years since that black nite I doubt if anyone who can remember, even though far removed, can't help but feel a twinge of concern even yet.

I have had much news and most kind letters, beautiful gifts, and have felt very important in some instances. But the most perfect joy in my life is to know my family is well and safe in their whereabouts.

## The Cyclone

Well to get back to Big Sandy Farm and nineteen twelve (1912) and nineteen thirteen (1913) I experienced my first big blow. A cyclone. Our house sat in the middle of an old apple orchard and this was late spring. Green apples were just about to ripen and the trees were full. The cyclone came through the orchard, over the house, and up the hill and through the woods. It cut the earth like a wide plough. Apple trees were blown out of the ground and green apples were everywhere, all over the ground, and a path of fresh cut road ran through the woods. I still remember all of those few minutes. As my concern grew for my mothers safety I rushed outside to see if she were safe on the milk house stoop. When I looked I could see nothing of her. The wind had blown an apple tree, which stood near the house, over the milk house entrance and so the fear I had the next few minutes froze me in my tracks. As I stood on that crude farmhouse porch and waited for mother, since she had made no sound and I could not find her, I waited knowing somehow that she had found shelter inside that squat hole in the hillside where we kept our milk cool in the summers. How relieved I was to see my faith in mother's wisdom and blessed calm had pulled her through another trial.

Father hurried everybody to gather the apples from the ground and the quick work it took in order to save all of these apples. Dad built a little dry house, a small building, closed up tight, allowing no escape of the sulphur being burnt. The apples were peeled, cut into slices and laid on swinging racks inside this building while the sulphur burned into the air and covered the apples with a coating, a protective chemical on the fruit. Theses apples, when washed and cooked, tasted like fresh apple sauce. So much for apples.

## Making Lye

Hominy is another process of long tedious work of making the wood lye in which to boil the corn. After it boils in this lye for several hours it is then washed in cold water until all the lye is completely washed out and the corn is white and bleached. It is now hominy.

Wood lye is a straining process which requires wood ashes piled in a tall hopper outside and water poured and run through the ashes. The small quantities of liquid dripping out into a bucket is wood lye.



## Choices

Well there wasn't anything my parents hadn't tried, even before us children came along, living and growing up in a very remote fashion at the close of the Civil War. A period of intense feelings were stirred up in a generation of descendants from pure Danish and Irish stock with some Dutch thrown in. To which I allow is a combination of genes that can't be outdone. So they were of a clan who faught hard, were strictly religious, even radical, and that is good in a manner, for how does one move on without some firm belief to better himself. And my father worked at his betterment and pulled himself out of a very deep handicap.

In father's youth there was the problem of leaving home and deciding which it shall be; and education or stay in the hills and grub out an existence. He chose in favor of educating himself for the ministry.

## Jack of All Trades

He doctored all twelve of us when we were ill. Half soled our shoes with his own hammer and foot last. Nursed my mother through her confinements. Taught school before he started in the ministry and never where we without having our mother and dad and knowing they were not too far away and always sure when we lay down at nite we would awake with the blessed smell of the breakfast they had rose early to prepare. Father would call us into the living room for mourning Bible reading and prayer.

## The Food Harvest

string beans were never canned in our home. They were picked from a corn patch and gathered in large tubs to be strung by all the household. And sometimes there would be the bean stringing party; ours were always a quiet affair with plenty of talk (chit, chat) and perhaps a taffy pulling afterwards. After all the beans were strung they were then placed in a very warm and dry place to shrivel up and bagged away for the winter. These were cooked in iron pots and seasoned with pork.

## Making Apple Butter

Apples were always cooked for apple butter in big brass kettles. Twenty gallon containers that set up high off the ground, supported mostly by a few bricks, with room enough under and around to build a hardwood fire. A few apples were added at a time to this cook off, which took from six to seven hours and was stirred constantly until the butter was declared ready for the sealing. Perhaps there would be ten or twelve gallons of this delicious mixture to pour off into earthen jars, or brown jugs as we called them, and then sealed around the opening with a hot flow of red brown was that had a strange smell, but nevertheless a sure seal. I can now smell the pure cinnamon oil that mother poured into this already delectable dish of homemade apple butter. Cooked on an open fire with the bright sun and light, warm wind blowing the smoke from the fire every which way, and sometimes filling our eyes with smoke. But we would never leave our post until we could find another to take the long long stick with the hoe like end reaching down in the mass of apples cooking and sputtering up into bubbles of light brown to dark brown, until finally the mixture had all turned to a deep brown and we kids were glad that day was over.



## Blackberries and Cobblers

Blackberry picking time was my favorite food adventure. For this was a time of year when summer was best and we could go and stay all day in the fields, pick the big black berries and completely loose ourselves in the days adventure. Mother made light bread, baked into big long loaves, hot out of the oven with chunks of butter that we churned from milk from our own cow and washed with clear cold water until all the milk was squeezed out. This was good on hot bread with blackberry jam to top it off.

And always there were the berry cobblers, which was the perfect dessert. And we never failed to expect many of these during the season. If you never saw a cobbler of any kind, conjure in your mind a large oven pan with two layers of biscuit dough, most delectable, made of sour cream and white flour, rolled into two crusts to fit the size of the pan, with big juicy fruits spread in between, flavored with a spice to your liking and served up hot in uniform pieces in bowls which would catch a good helping of thick cream.

## The Old Fashioned Picnic

I have gone to many gatherings called picnic. Some just family affairs, like running off to the park with a few wieners to roast and cold buns to serve. Maybe a bottle of pop or half cold watermelon. But most of all what we enjoyed from these so called picnics were the cool of the trees and green grass after too many hot days living on crowded streets. But one has not lived who has not lived for two weeks in preparation for one old fashioned picnic. You ponder for days and conjure all the wonderful food that will be carried to the picnic and when the day arrives you hope it doesn't rain. And what a let down to one and all if it should, but perfect dream if the sky shows not one cloud.

I can't say the right words to describe these planned meetings of the good folks of the small country side who have lived simple and worked hard on small bits of land. Some on many acres which go to make up one great state. And West Virginia was quite a young and growing local. In my very early youth and up until I was in my late teen we spent our sojourn in remote by ways with a general store and post office combined, one church, maybe two or three homes near by where you are sure you can borrow a cup of sugar and never get the guilty conscience that you are imposing (tis a friendly way to meet your next door neighbor). Neighbors in this remote land were necessary for survival.

## Well The Day of The Appointed Time For The Picnic Arrives

Usually all church picnics were planned for some Sunday and always outdoors upon the most suitable spot on the church premises. But if there was not room for such a spread, then we would gather on some other spot nearby. With baskets of fried chicken, potato salad with homemade dressing, and spice cakes and jars and jars of fresh cucumber horse radish pickle. Fresh apple pies and little red sweet and sour beets. Many dishes were prepared by each family who attended these glorious times. All spread out on a make-shift table and everyone could reach in to his choice and stuff himself so full of this tempting display without begging apologies in defense for acting like a pig.



## Memories and Dreams

True homemade ice cream in my childhood was made with pure cream from the milk house and eggs fresh from the laying. It was a rare treat because ice had to be gotten for the freezing. All this required considerable scurrying about to some farmers sawdust house, where chopped ice cut from the river or creek in winter, was put in storage in the sawdust house for summertime use. Chunks of this ice had to be crushed around a hand turned churn. The churn was in another container revolving in the ice, stirring the custard into ice cream. How mad with joy and excitement were we children when our good neighbors would invite us on some hot summer day to come and join in the preparation. To me it had a party flavor; and at the age of nine (9) so many things in my life had a magic flavor.

The old time customs, most of them have died. Those were happier days and I look back with great admiration to a generation who worked hard and succeeded against many odds. I have a feeling our children have not lived, but only endured a series of emergencies. The whole world is in agony and we have lost the simple life.

## A Bit of History

During the years of 1914 and 1917 we saw the boys go away by train loads to fight the first World War, off into a strange and far away land. Some never to return. The wide ocean kept us isolated from other people of the earth. But this moving of troops into the old world broke our normal life and fear shook us with great concern. Though I was yet a young thing I knew our life, the simple peaceful life, had been destroyed. It was a sad summer, hot and weary, with thoughts of war. Too make the summer more uncomfortable the locust had come by the millions with ever mournful noise, reminding us of the seven plagues.

The boys in our house are in the between years and do not go away to war. Not until 1917 does the oldest one, Bennett, join the Navy to be sent over with a cargo to deliver at Bordeaux, France. He spent fifteen months in the Navy. Fifteen months of wasted time; for other boys grew up and went away to a second World War. That second war gave us many terrifying days and nites because by now my own dearly beloved son had to be in it.

## Looking Back

We had no form of amusement except those we created for ourselves. Father gave us an organ when I was eleven years old. A very high upright ornament of dark carved wood. A lovely wind instrument filling a vacant corner in our parlor. I never learned to play well, but we kept it for many years for the lovely thing it was.

Young groups today go to the corner drug store for soda pop and friendly contact, but in my young years we planned evenings of box socials, spelling bees, taffy pulls and popcorn parties, on rare occasions a birthday party, and long hikes into the country, maybe to explore some old rock formation up in the hills. The need to feel the touch of warm friendship created many pleasant occurrences. And the clock is ticking on.

That was the enchanting years of blessed memories. Memories that have burned in my mind and precious to have in times of struggle.



I am coming through a fast changing world, a complete turn about which has nothing I desire. But one must grow up and take what life and fate hands over to you. If it is good or bad, do the best you know how. That's a bit of philosophy my mother quoted to me. My mother, under years of defeat and subjection to a cause which no doubt she had very little interest in, and a husband who was sole head of the household.

#### Epilogue

by Ruth Taylor Allen

I am very thankful we had no radio or TV when my sister and I were growing up. (Course no one had TV when we were children.) If we had had other forms of entertainment we would never have been exposed to the stories that are a part of our family history. We heard the following tales from my mother and I find them interesting enough to include them in this journal.

The tragedy of the Titanic with its great loss of life affected her very much, but just six years later she lived through and was part of a terrible tragedy that took place all over this country. This was the devastating flu epidemic of 1918. It was a particularly sever strain of the disease and there was no magic medication for it. You either recovered or you died. My mother went into the homes of some of her father's parishioners to care for the stricken families. She told us the story of one home in particular where she was nursing the sick. The pride of this family, a ten year old girl, went off to school on Friday morning, apparently in good health, only to return that afternoon with symptoms of the disease. She went to bed with the flu on Friday evening and this beloved child was dead by Monday afternoon. And similar tragedies were taking place by the thousands all over the country.

#### Strange Folks, Strange Ways

I don't know if it is the isolation and loneliness or are people just born strange? I believe it is probably a combination of all the above. Regardless of the cause, one of those off center folks lived nearby and she was expecting a baby. Well time passed and the baby was born. Shortly after the birth the mother came to my mothers home for a visit. When she came in the house and sat down for a bite to eat my grandmother inquired about the whereabouts of the new baby. Completely unperturbed the new mother replied, "Oh, I didn't want to bother anyone, so I just left the baby in the haystack in the yard." Apparently the baby was none the worse for the experience.

#### Southern Hospitality

I'm sure you've heard the phrase Southern Hospitality many times. It isn't just good manners. There was a practical and humane reason for the custom. When the country was young, it was a matter of survival. For there were no Holiday Inns or facsimiles back in those hills, no street lights, and quite often no roads. If you were on a journey in those hills and night overtook you (so black you could not see your hand in front of you) you could be in real trouble if the first habitation you came upon would not give you shelter. This was a reciprocal custom among the hill folks and I wonder how many lives were saved due to this custom.



## Family

My mother was the fifth child of twelve children born to Thomas and Ruth Ann McCarty. Even though she kept a very complete family history of her forefathers, even unto her great grandparents, she left no record of the order of the births of her siblings. I know the three oldest brothers were Bennett, Emerson and Vincent in that order. Her sister Ruby was one of the four older children and she died of a <sup>respiratory</sup> ~~respiratory~~ illness (probably pneumonia) before her third birthday. Ninnie Elizabeth, my mother, was the fifth child. I believe it was the death of their first daughter that made my mother especially dear to her parents.

The following children made up the rest of this large family. May was my mother's dear sister. Then came four more brothers, Garrett, Samuel, Justin, and Charles Edward (always called Ed). Martha, the youngest sister, was a surviving twin. Her twin, a little boy, was still born. Babies were then delivered at home and my mother remembered this birth and saw her father carry the tiny form, wrapped in white linen, from the birthing room. It was not uncommon for parents to lose several children before the medical marvels we now take for granted were discovered. Smallpox, diphtheria, whooping cough, and polio were all dreaded words to young parents. And of course there were other illnesses and accidents that took their toll. When my mother's sister May fell out of the buggy it was an accident that had a happy ending. The thick red mud she fell into saved her from serious injury as the buggy wheels rolled over her.

## Vincent

Vincent was my mother's third brother, a tall handsome young man who found the opportunities for young men in his time and place very limited. He believed that joining the Marines would provide him a future. (It surely did.)

Even though Haiti was a free and independent country, the United States Government deemed it necessary to send the U.S. Marine Corp into Haiti to quell the civil unrest after the assassination of the Haitian President. Vincent suffered an injury in this military action that he never fully recovered from. My mother's brother lived out the rest of his life (approximately sixty years) in Veterans Hospitals until his death in 1976 at the age of seventy nine years. The tragedy of Vincent's life was an on going grief for my mother and her family.

## Ruth Ann Eagle McCarty

Even though Thomas Morgan is buried in Vermont under a double headstone for husband and wife, I believe Ruth Ann finally had the last word. Her name, Ruth Ann Eagle is centered on the headstone, while the name McCarty is on the top of the beautiful grey granite stone. She rests in Mountainview Cemetery in the town of Marlinton, West Virginia, her birthplace. Her son Vincent is buried next to her. Thomas Morgan 1870 - 1934 Ruth Ann 1870 - 1952

## West Virginia

West Virginia did not become a state until the Civil War. Before the war it was the western section of the state of Virginia. I'm sure many West Virginians have heard something like this, when informing people where they are from, "Oh yes,



we've been to Williamsburg," or "I was stationed at Norfolk." I even heard, "Virginia is a beautiful state." No..West, by God Virginia, with emphasis on West, will quite often be the response to this lack of knowledge of the geography and history of our country. Travel south on the toll road (I-77) from Charleston to Bluefield and you will marvel at the rugged beauty of this state. You will have an appreciation of the strength, both physical and mental, of the people that built their homes and raised their families in this rugged and remote environment. Many of the ways and customs of the "old country" went into the hills with them and due to the isolation these customs were passed on from one generation to the next with very little change. Just one example was the way my mother pronounced words such as fish and dish. She always said feesh and deesh. This was correct Elizabethian English at the time her forefathers settled in those mountains (the Alleghenies) and I am glad I never corrected her for what I deemed to be a flaw in her speech. It took a great belief in their own abilities for those pioneers to cross over those mountains, sometimes illegally, and carve out homes in a land that I understand was even to rugged and inhospitable for the Indians to live in. They would hunt, but not live in that harsh land.

Pocahontas County, Lobelia, West Virginia in the Allegheny Mountains was my mother's birthplace. Even though she left West Virginia as a young woman to marry and raise four children, my mother remained a child of her environment all of her life.

Amen

Early one afternoon on the thirteenth day of December, 1967 the clock stopped ticking. Tick Tock, Tick -



Bill

Thanks for looking up John Bruffy  
for me. And enclosed is my mother's  
story. I guess all of us should write a short  
history for our children. Hope to get to  
Dacahontas in the spring.

Thanks Again

Ruth Allen

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